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ABSTRACT

In an effort to present multicultural content in a non-threatening and effective way, an intercollegiate, team-taught General Psychology course was sponsored by Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC), a rural college on a Native American reservation in Northeast Nebraska, and Metropolitan Community College (MCC), an urban college in Omaha. The course provided urban students and faculty with the opportunity to participate in Native American cultural events and classes at the reservation college campus. It also offered an opportunity to determine whether cross-cultural contact facilitated by in-class discussions would result in measurable change in awareness and knowledge of multicultural factors. Student awareness and knowledge regarding multicultural issues in psychology were measured through pre- and post-tests using an established instrument, which was also administered to a control group of students in a traditional General Psychology class at MCC. An analysis of responses indicated that the experimental group had higher mean scores than the control group on 13 of 20 questions, while the control group had higher scores on 5, indicating that the traditional course effectively increased students' knowledge and awareness, but that the experimental course may add significantly to that. The study also noted that the small number of participants and the inability to randomly select participants did not allow researchers to draw definitive conclusions. The survey instrument and tabulated responses are appended. (TGI)

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ED 389 353

Contact: An Intercollegiate Team Teaching Project

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Introduction

Among its critical observations of American Education, the Wingspread Report on American Education, (1993), included the charge that our educational system at all levels has failed to meet the demographic and technological challenges that have resulted in a worldwide marketplace. The *Workforce 2000* report (U.S. Department of Labor, 1987) has predicted that during the 1990s, about 85 percent of people entering the workforce will be minorities, with white males accounting for the remaining 15%. This increasing diversity is already becoming apparent among students within the educational system and contributes to the general movement toward multiculturalism in education (Farley, 1995). These changes have resulted in a growing commitment in higher education to foster, as basic components of our educational system, increased multicultural understanding and an appreciation of the inherent value of diversity .

Various approaches have been employed to present the world views of minority groups within the classroom under the intuitively reasonable but mistaken belief that any exposure to minority views will breed understanding and tolerance, (Vaughn, 1994). Membership and success within the dominant culture produces self protective mechanisms, (such as avoidance, distortion and denial), within students and instructors alike that can result in a sometimes painful and emotionally charged atmosphere for multicultural instruction, (Helms, 1992; Vaughn, 1994). The challenge of presenting multicultural content through non-threatening and sensitive methods

without diminishing the quality of the content may be as significant a problem as the current uncertainty about what is actually to be taught.

In the fall of 1994, Nebraska Indian Community College and Metropolitan Community College funded by the Cooper Foundation sponsored a college course, (General Psychology), as an inter-college multicultural team teaching project. The design of the course provided urban students (and faculty) the opportunity to participate in Native American cultural events, to participate in combined classes with shared materials, presentation, discussion and social time, and to participate in class at the reservation college campus. The intercultural experiences were integrated into the remainder of the course content through discussion and written assignments. Student awareness and knowledge regarding multicultural issues in psychology were measured by means of a pre-test and post-test using an established instrument, (D'Andrea, Daniels & Heck, 1991), that was modified for the purpose. The responses were also compared to pre-test and post-test responses of an urban class of General Psychology students that served as a control group. This paper will describe the methodology of the study and the analysis of the results.

Prior Research

Until recently there has been little longitudinal research reported on the impact of different college environments on student attitudes toward race. The research that has been conducted suggests that a combination of pedagogical techniques and content can be used to encourage discussions that may result in students reflecting more on their thinking about issues of race and diversity (Milem, 1994). In particular, Allport states that although casual

contact can actually reinforce prejudice, acquaintance contacts that generate knowledge and understanding are likely to contribute to a reduction in prejudice (Milem, 1994). Milem in his 1994 study used multivariate analyses to examine seven groups of variables that effect student commitment to the goal of "helping to promote racial understanding." Among the variables identified by Milem were student characteristics, living arrangements, institutional characteristics, peer and faculty normative measures, and college experiences. In his research, Milem has focused upon four year colleges leaving uncertainty that the results are relevant to the experiences of two year institutions.

As an inter-college multicultural team teaching project, a General Psychology class offered provided an opportunity to examine whether cross-cultural contact facilitated by in-class discussions would result in measurable change in awareness and knowledge as reported by Milem, (p. 69). Since the course was offered in a community college setting, any measurable change in awareness and knowledge would also suggest that college experiences identified by Milem could be effective within the two year college setting. The project also offered the possibility that the combined efforts of faculty through an inter-college approach could have a measurable effect upon student's awareness and knowledge of multicultural factors.

Method

Despite a drive distance of two hours, Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) located in Winnebago, Nebraska and Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in Omaha, Nebraska, have had a partnership in effect for the last two years. This relationship has provided the opportunity

for several shared experiences for faculty, staff and administrators. NICC is located upon a large reservation in Northeast Nebraska and serves the Omaha, Winnebago and Lakota tribes. MCC serves a largely urban but otherwise diverse student population at three major and two satellite campuses. Funding was granted by the Cooper Foundation as a pilot project to determine the effectiveness of efforts to extend the benefits of cultural exposure to students through team teaching of a standard general education course.

General Psychology was selected as the course for the project since it is regularly offered at both institutions, has the same required textbook at both institutions and includes course content that addresses cultural issues. An experienced full-time faculty member was selected from each institution, a female Native American instructor from NICC and a white male instructor from MCC. Since each college uses a different academic calendar, arrangements were made for shared class sessions to occur on two Saturdays during the course. Each shared session necessitated the transportation of one of the classes to the other campus. Each institution served as host campus for one of these extended sessions, providing a lunch for the classes to share.

While NICC provides one offering of General Psychology for each semester, MCC with a larger student body offers several classes. Since the NICC course was offered during the week, NICC students who participated in the shared class meetings were paid a nominal stipend of $15 for each inter-collegiate class attended to defray any personal expense that might be incurred by the requirement of extra sessions. At MCC the course was regularly scheduled for Saturdays and was advertised as having a cultural component in conjunction with NICC.

In addition to opportunities to socialize over lunch, the shared classes involved a course content that provided exposure to the rural Native American experience and worldview. The class session at MCC included a discussion facilitated by the NICC instructor of the cultural meaning of an Indian PowWow and was followed by participation in a PowWow that was in-progress at the Fort Omaha Campus of MCC. The shared class session at NICC addressed learning issues experienced my Native Americans, included the viewing of the film "White Man's Way" followed by discussion facilitated by the NICC instructor in which some tribal students presented personal experiences related to the film. During regular Saturday classes, MCC students discussed these shared experiences, perceptions of Indian culture, and personal responses to the style differences of instructors and differences in lifestyles observed at the reservation. Additionally, students at MCC were required to prepare one-page reaction papers. Otherwise, the MCC course content followed the course outline used in all of the MCC courses of General Psychology.

One of the regularly scheduled General Psychology classes taught by another white male full-time experienced faculty member at MCC was used as a control group. Selected questions from the Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-Skills Survey (MAKSS) developed by Andreas, Daniels and Heck (1991) were administered to both the control class and the experimental class as a pretest and posttest. The instrument was originally developed for measurement of graduate level counseling students awareness, knowledge and skills in multicultural counseling. Eleven items of the Awareness subscale and nine items of the Knowledge subscale were felt to be appropriate to the General Psychology class. The authors of the original instrument report the MAKSS to have high reliability for each of the subscales, (reliability

alphas of .75, .90 and .96 respectively), while the Awareness subscale demonstrates content validity with the Awareness subscale of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Subscale (MCAS). The reliability of the Awareness subscale is hypothesized to be somewhat lower due to less internal consistency of items resulting from the more diverse nature of the construct of Awareness as compared to Knowledge (D'Andrea, Daniels and Heck, 1991). An abbreviated form of the instrument's demographic section was also used, including gender, age, and income. The last 4 digits of the social security numbers was used to match pretest and posttest responses. The responses of students who were present for the pretest but not the posttest were excluded in both the control and experimental groups.

Due to existing registration methods, students were not randomly selected for participation in the project and the results would therefore not be generalizable. Milem (1994) observes that: "It is essentially impossible to design an experimental study of college impact given that students do not distribute themselves randomly to all different types of institutions available to them. This makes it extremely difficult to control for the entering characteristics of students included in a study," (page 64). Enquiries made to students entering the MCC class demonstrated that the cross-cultural content had not been a significant factor for student selection of the course; the reason most frequently given for registering for the course was to avoid conflict with work schedules. Most students had not noticed the notation advising them of the uniqueness of the course. Although a lid had been placed upon enrollment at MCC to maintain manageability for transportation and feasibility of open discussions, the maximum number of students was not reached until immediately before the course began and no students were turned away.

Results

The ratio of males to females in the control and experimental groups was similar, with twice as many females as males in both groups. However, the students in the experimental group represented a more diverse racial mix, (including Asian, African American and European ancestry), while the control group was entirely of European ancestry. The experimental group also had a larger proportion of lower-income students, (i.e., family income of less than $30,000). The mean age of the control group was 24.9 years; that of the experimental group was 30.1 years. On average, the experimental group represented an older population than did the control group.

A t-test comparison of pretest and posttest results for both the control and experimental groups revealed that both groups had higher mean scores on both the Awareness and Knowledge subscales. Since some students did not respond to all questions, the number of cases (n) was consequently smaller for the subscales, affecting the level of significance. The differences between pretest and postest scores for each group was significant only on the Knowledge subscale, (t=5.60 for the control group and t=3.46 for the experimental group, alpha 10%). These results were confirmed by nonparametric tests, (Wilcoson Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test).

The mean score of the experimental group was higher on both the Awareness and Knowledge subscales than was the mean score for the control group. However, the difference between the two groups' mean scores was not statistically significant in either case, (t=-1.56 and t=-.47, alpha 10%). These results were again confirmed by nonparametric tests, (Mann-Whitney U - Wilcoxon Rank sum W Test).

When the changes in the responses to individual questions are analyzed, the experimental group's mean score was higher than the control group's mean score on 13 of the 20 questions, (numbers 1, 2 , 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, and 18). Of these, the difference was statistically significant for 6 questions, (numbers 4, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 18). There was no difference in the mean scores for the two groups on two questions, (numbers 12 and 20). On 5 questions, the control group's mean score was higher than the experimental group's, (numbers 3, 5, 14, 15, and 19). For questions 3 and 15, the difference was statistically significant. As for each of the prior statistics, the results were confirmed by non-parametric tests. Thus, the experimental group showed a statistically significant increase in awareness as measured by 4 questions, (4, 6, 10, and 11), and a statistically significant increase in knowledge as measured by 2 questions, (16 and 18). The control group had scores that were higher at a statistically significant level for one measure of awareness, (question 3), and for one measure of knowledge, (question 15).

Discussion

Due to the small number of participants, the inability to randomly select participants, and to control for differences in race, income and age, the study design does not allow for definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, the results indicating that the control group achieved higher mean scores on both the Awareness and Knowledge Subscales indicates that traditional classroom approaches may be effective without additional experiential components. That statistical significance was achieved on the Knowledge Subscale indicates that students are gaining at least an increased understanding of basic concepts such as culture, racism, and prejudice in traditionally taught introductory

Pyschology classes; it is less clear that they may also be gaining an awareness of differences between their own culture and that of others.

The comparison of mean scores for the control and experimental group appears to indicate that the additional exposure to Native American culture experienced by the experimental group participants may have added to the change in both Awareness and Knowledge subscales achieved by the control group. In fact, the opportunity to experience and discuss another culture appears to have contributed to a significant increase in individual measures of knowledge and even more of those of awareness. As measured by the questions in the subscale, awareness appears to require a higher level of learning associated with internalization and evaluation of knowledge. Contributions to increased awareness suggest the possibility of longer-lasting change, an important issue that is unaddressed by this study.

Conclusion

The NICC and MCC inter-college team project appears to have made a contribution to participant awareness, and, to a lesser extent, to knowledge of multicultural issues. Despite Allport's concern that intercultural exposure could result in development of negative attitudes, the project appears to have maintained positive results. The extent and significance of the overall contributions is uncertain in part because of small sample size, lack of random selection, and inability to control for extraneous variables. The study provides tentative support for the conclusion that intercultural exposure and discussion can augment student awareness and knowledge of multicultural factors within a two year college setting.

Among recommendations for future studies is an increase in sample size for both experimental and control groups. Since student participation is by self-selection, the issue of random selection is not likely to be resolved. A longitudinal design spanning several years would also allow evaluation of change durability.

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GENDER, RACIAL, AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION FOR EXPERIMENTAL CLASS (N=9) AND CONTROL CLASS (N=9)

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

	Experimental Class	Control Class
Females	6	7
Males	3	2

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

	Experimental Class	Control Class
White	4	9
African American	2	0
Asian	2	0
Other	1	0

INCOME DISTRIBUTION

	Experimental Class	Control Class
Less than $30,000	6	4
$30,000 to $90,000	2	4
Over $90,000	1	1

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CONTACT: An Intercollege Team Teaching Project

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES FOR
PRE- AND POST-TEST
CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

Control Group

	#Cases	Mean	Differences Mean	T Value	Z Value
Awareness					
Pretest	8	30.00			
Posttest	8	30.25	.25	.31	.3815
Knowledge					
Pretest	8	22.625			
Posttest	8	25.375	2.75	5.60	.0005

Experimental Group

	#Cases	Mean	Differences Mean	T Value	Z Value
Awareness					
Pretest	5	29.40			
Posttest	5	32.20	2.8	1.96	.0610
Knowledge					
Pretest	8	23.25			
Posttest	8	26.50	3.25	3.46	.0055

Comparison of the Difference Between
Pre- and Post-test Mean Scores

	#Cases	Mean	T Value	Z Value
Awareness				
Control Group	8	.25		
Exp. Group	5	2.80	-1.56	.083
Knowledge				
Control group	8	2.75		
Exp. group	8	3.25	-.47	.3235

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The following questionnaire is being used for statistical purposes only. The responses will be maintained as confidential. The resulting data will be used on an aggregate basis only.

The questionnaire is intended to gather information that will be helpful to social science instructors in developing and designing course content. Participation is voluntary. Should you choose not to participate, you may return the uncompleted questionnaire to the class monitor or instructor. In completing the questionnaire, please write the last four numbers of your social security number at the top of the front page.

Thank you for your participation. The results of the survey will be available through the instructor at the beginning of the Winter Quarter.

MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS*

AGE: _____ Last 4 digits of Social Security Number ____

GENDER: Male Female (Circle one)

RACE: _____

ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME (Check one)

_____ Less than $10,000
_____ $10,000-$20,000
_____ $20,000-$30,000
_____ $30,000-$40,000
_____ $40,000-$50,000
_____ $50,000-$60,000
_____ $60,000-$70,000
_____ $70,000-$80,000
_____ $80,000-$90,000
_____ $90,000-$100,000
_____ More than $100,000

QUESTIONS:

1. Culture is not external but is within the person.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. One of the potential negative consequences about gaining information concerning specific cultures is that students might stereotype members of those cultural groups according to the information they have gained.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. At this time in your life, how would you rate yourself in terms of understanding how your cultural background has influenced the way you think and act?
   Very Limited Limited Fairly Aware Very Aware

4. At this point in your life, how would you rate your understanding of the impact of the way you think and act when interacting with persons of different cultural backgrounds?
   Very Limited Limited Fairly Aware Very Aware

5. How would you react to the following statement? While psychology enshrines the concepts of freedom, rational thought, tolerance of new ideas, and equality, it has frequently become a form of oppression to subjugate large groups of people.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. In general, how would you rate your level of awareness regarding different cultural institutions and systems?
   Very Limited Limited Fairly Aware Very Aware

7. The human service professions, especially counseling and clinical psychology, have failed to meet the mental health needs of ethnic minorities.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

* Adapted from: D'Andrea, M.; Daniels, J.; Heck, R. (1991). Evaluating the Impact of Multicultural Counseling Training. Journal of Counseling & Development, (70)1, 149.

8. At the present time, how would you generally rate yourself in terms of being able to accurately compare your own cultural perspective with that of a person from another culture?
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

9. How well do you think you could distinguish "intentional" from "accidental" communication signals in a multicultural counseling situation?
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

10. Ambiguity and stress often result from multicultural situations because people are not sure what to expect from each other.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

11. Psychological problems vary with the culture of the client.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

At the present time, how would you rate your own understanding of the following terms:

12. "Culture"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

13. "Ethnicity"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

14. "Racism"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

15. "Prejudice"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

16. "Ethnocentrism"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

17. "Pluralism"
   Very Limited Limited Good Very Good

18. What do you think of the following statement? Witch doctors and psychiatrists use similar techniques.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

19. In the early grades of formal schooling in the United States, the academic achievement of such ethnic minorities as African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans is close to parity with the achievement of White mainstream students.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

20. Research indicates that in the early elementary school grades, girls and boys achieve about equally in mathematics and science.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree